IDENTIFYING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ENROLLMENT IN TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION COURSES AT REEDSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

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IDENTIFYING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ENROLLMENT IN TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION COURSES AT REEDSBURG HIGH SCHOOL
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The number of students enrolled in the Technology Education program at Reedsburg High School has been declining. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence students' decisions to enroll in Technology Education courses. These factors were identified by administering a questionnaire to the tenth grade class at Reedsburg High School during the 2002-2003 school year.

The population of this study consisted of half of the tenth grade students enrolled at Reedsburg High School during the fourth quarter of the 2002-2003 school year. At the tenth grade level, the students had tentatively mapped out their high school academic plan. So at this juncture in their high school career, they had already made some choices about what electives they would be taking in the years to come. The tenth grade students were also chosen because they may still be able to benefit from the outcomes of this study.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part dealt with questions to find out demographic information such as the gender of the student, family information, and the post high

school plans of the students. The remaining questions were designed to gather information as to why students were not enrolling in technology education courses. Students were given between two and five choices for each question to select when filling out this portion of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of two questions addressing the source and level of influence they experience when enrolling in high school courses. The first question sought to find out who influenced students to enroll in the courses that they take. The second question posed a series of statements about negative influence on course enrollment (or choice) to which the students responded. A three point Likert-type scale was used for these two questions.

The results of the study suggest that there is no real significant data that shows there are people influencing students not to enroll in Technology Education courses. The data also indicated that Technology Education course offerings had a very positive image among students. Worth noting, though, is the fact that guidance counselors and teachers have very little influence at all on the courses that students choose to take throughout high school. The course curriculum is a factor in why males are more interested in taking courses than the females. Another factor in why students were not enrolling in Technology Education courses was graduation requirements. Of the males and females that responded that they would like to take a class but didn't, the main reason was because of graduation requirements.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In today's world, technology is changing at an extremely rapid rate. This rapid pace has made the acquisition of technical knowledge even more important. To keep pace with the technological changes, students in high school should be taking courses (Hill, 1999). It would be reasonable to assume that, given the increasing importance of technology in our society, enrollment in Technology Education courses should be on the rise. In actuality, the opposite is happening in many schools. According to (Gray 1990), the enrollment of students in Technology Education courses is on the decline. He states that many students are opting to take required college preparatory courses rather than elective courses like Technology Education courses in order to be well prepared for college.

The Technology Education department in Reedsburg has been one of those schools. In fact, in the last three years their numbers have declined steadily, which has raised concern. During the 2000-2001 school year, 578 students out of a total school enrollment of 844 took Technology Education courses. If this is compared to the 2002-2003 school year, where the number of students taking Technology Education courses shrunk to 491 out of 888, one can see that this concern is warranted. This represents a thirteen percent drop over the last three years. A table with this information can be found on the following page. The factors that are causing this decline are not clear at this time.

School Year	Total High School Students	Students Enrolled in Technology Education Courses	Percent of Students Body Enrolled in Technology Education Courses	Percent Change in Enrollment from Previous Year
2000-2001	844	578	68 %	
2001-2002	876	550	63 %	- 5 %
2002-2003	888	491	55 %	- 8 %

Table 1. Enrollment Data from 2000 to 2003

From having conversations with other technology educators, teachers, students, and reading numerous articles the consensus is that some of the factors that may be causing declining enrollment in courses in the high school may be:

1. Graduation requirements in Wisconsin have become more stringent. In order for schools to meet the state standards, students may be required to take more core subject area classes. High school teachers are feeling the stress of making sure that all the standards are met before the students graduate. The high school curriculum has been changed to meet these standards and it has negatively impacted Technology Education. Technology Education classrooms do not have specific standards to meet and are left out of this push. This results in students only being able to take a minimal number of elective courses.

2. Students may be looking ahead to classes that they may have to take for college entrance requirements. Over the past few years colleges have raised the requirements needed to gain entry into their schools. For example, most colleges and universities require three semesters of a foreign language.

3. The curriculum of the Technology Education program may not be changing along with the changing needs of technology and society. This may mean that the classes are not

meeting the needs and interests of today's students. "Programs that are outdated in terms of curriculum and facilities also will have trouble attracting students" (Hill, 1999, p. 22).

Declining enrollment can have many negative effects on a program. One such effect is a withdrawal of support. Some indicators of this problem may surface in the form of direct or indirect warnings from immediate superiors, administrators, or peers (Hill, 1999). Disgruntled students can also withhold their support and respect for the program. This lack of support and respect often shows itself in the terms of budget cuts. Funding cuts can prove to be very detrimental to a program causing teachers to be laid off and even some programs to be cut entirely. Declining enrollment can lead to any one of these problems. More often than not, each one tends to occur at the same time as the result of each other.

The goal of this study was to find out which of these factors, or others, are directly contributing to the declining enrollment in the Technology Education program at Reedsburg High School. It may not be a single reason, but a combination of many factors, which has led to the loss of students.

There are definite signs that high school Technology Education is in trouble. One of the most obvious signs is the decreasing number of students who are participating in these courses. This decline is occurring in many cities and towns across the nation (Hill, 1999). In the town of Reedsburg, Wisconsin this has become a major concern. The following chart shows this decline as it has occurred over the last three years. Although this decline does not seem drastic from year to year, if the decline is analyzed over the three year span one can see that the enrollment dropped thirteen percent. This also translates into eighty-seven fewer students enrolling in Technology Education courses. If this trend continues the program is in serious jeopardy of having classes dropped and the possible elimination of a department member. In the present year

four classes were dropped from the semester schedule due to lack of student enrollment. Therefore, the causes of declining enrollment must be identified and examined.

Statement of the Problem

The number of students enrolled in the Technology Education program at Reedsburg High School has been declining. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence students' decisions to enroll in Technology Education courses. These factors were identified by administering a questionnaire to the tenth grade class at Reedsburg High School during the 2002-2003 school year. The results of this study will help shape recommendations to improve the enrollment and also improve the Technology Education Program.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Who influences students not to enroll in a Technology Education course?
2. What level of influence do the people listed in the questionnaire have in the student's course selection?
3. What influences students not to enroll in a Technology Education course?
4. How do the influences that students face in their course selection differ between genders?

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Reasons for Declining Enrollment in Technology Education

There is much speculation as to why the enrollment in electives is declining in many areas of the country. One explanation is that many states have raised the graduation requirements for high school students. These increases have put extra pressure on students to ensure that they are adequately prepared to graduate. The state of Wisconsin requires that each high school student successfully complete a minimum of: 4.0 credits of English, 3.0 credits of social studies, 2.0 credits of mathematics, 2.0 credits of science, 1.5 credits of physical education, 0.5 credits of health for a total of 13.0 credits (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2000). The state superintendent also encourages school boards to require an additional 8.5 credits selected from any combination of vocational education, foreign languages, fine arts and other courses.

There has been some evidence to support this belief. A study conducted by the Center for Policy Study in Education (Olson, 1989) reported that some evidence exists that those most affected were noncollege-bound students. They were forced to take low-quality academic courses in place of quality vocational courses. The result is students who had no job skills and were not prepared for the workforce.

There are, however, other studies that show conflicting evidence. Research conducted for the National Assessment of Vocational Education (Wirt, 1989); found that since graduation requirements increased, declines in the average numbers of vocational credits taken were small relative to the large increases in academic credits. They concluded that indeed students did take

more academic courses, but not typically at the expense of vocational education. One other study concerning declining enrollment found "no conclusive evidence that increased graduation requirements were negatively affecting vocational education enrollments" (Strickland, Elson, & Frantz, 1987, p. 41). Therefore increased graduation requirements alone do not appear to explain the declining enrollment in Technology Education.

Today there seems to be an increased preference for higher education. According to Krei and Rosenbaum (2001), 86% of high school seniors planned to get college degrees. More and more businesses are requiring some sort of post-secondary education, especially if there is any desire to move up within the business. They are looking for workers with higher order thinking skills, problem solving abilities, and greater independence (Grubb, 1996). In order to increase economic well-being, employers stress the quality of human resources to the high schools (Goldberger, Kazix, 1996).

Another influencing factor is parents. A large majority of parents would like to see their children go to college. Along with this, school administrators and school faculty members seem to take a sense of pride in high numbers of college bound students (Krei, Rosenbaum). Between 1982 and 1992 the number of high school sophomores who were encouraged to go to college by teachers or counselors went up from 32% to 66% (Gray).

With technology advancing as its current rate, the need for further education is almost a must. Because of this increased pressure to pursue higher education students are faced with the need to prepare themselves more thoroughly at the high school level. With college entrance requirements being so demanding, many students are hesitant to take Technology Education courses in place of college-required courses (Meier, 1991). According to Gray, Wang, and Malizia (1995), all but 7 percent of students were enrolled in the common college prep courses.

The University of Wisconsin-Stout (2000) requires that prospective students successfully complete 17 college preparatory credits with the following distribution:

- four credits of English
- three credits of mathematics (*Algebra I and higher*)
- three credits of science
- three credits of social science
- two credits from the above areas, or foreign language
- two credits from the above areas, or fine arts, computer science and other academic or vocational areas.

Oftentimes a college preparatory schedule leaves no room for elective Technology Education courses (Rossetti, Elliot, Price, McClay, 1989).

Another explanation for declining enrollment is a stagnant curriculum. Lack of curricular reform has been identified as one of the main reasons for programs experiencing enrollment decline (Lewis, 1991). Again the point of an ever-changing technological world can be brought to the front. If the curriculum does not keep stride, then the program becomes "boring" and "not interesting" to students, which in turn, results in declining numbers.

To ensure a dynamic program is maintained the faculty needs to be committed to curriculum revisions (Hill, 1999). Hill also goes on to say that for this to happen the curriculum should be reviewed on a regular basis. It is the researcher's belief that this is a critical issue in the Reedsburg School District.

Factors that Influence Enrollment

The decision to enroll in Technology Education courses is made by students with influence from many factors. The barriers as classified by Lam (1982) fall into three main categories, which include Intrapersonal, Immediate external, and Remote external.

Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal reasons include attitudes, images, perceptions, motivation, and value systems. An individual will reject an activity that has had a negative image or words associated with that activity (Social Learning and Career Decision Making, 1979). Many people believe that Technology Education courses are for non-college bound students. This leads to the general view that Technology Education programs are a dumping ground for the less able students. This negative attitude towards Technology Education causes difficulty in recruitment and selection of students (O'Neill, 1985).

In a study where students were to report their own image of Technology Education they rated it either positive or very positive (Dube, 1987). These results would tend to refute other research on the negative attitudes of vocational education courses. However, when asked to comment on their friend's attitude toward vocational education courses, 51% of the students stated that their friends had a negative image of vocational education courses. Dube believes that it is this negative image that contributes to students not enrolling in vocational education courses.

People will choose a career or occupation which will maximize their gains and minimize their losses. Some of these gains and losses may include money, prestige, power, and other internal motivational factors (Herr, 1970). However, there is a belief that Technology Education prepares students for jobs that fall short in most of these categories.

Immediate External

The Immediate external category can be broken down further into school factors and influences of others. School factors include graduation requirements, college entrance requirements, and curriculum. Forty-three percent of non-vocational students said they had considered taking a vocational course of study (Jacobs, 1975). The main reasons why students

chose not to enroll in a vocational education course were graduation requirements and college entrance requirements. Eighteen percent of the 43% that had considered enrolling in a vocational education course said they were discouraged from enrolling because of classes they needed for graduation. When the graduation requirements are raised more of the students' day has to be spent in academic/core courses. This leads to a decrease in the time allowed for vocational courses.

Another school factor that has an influence on a student's course decision is the curriculum. Jacobs found that a lack of a desired curriculum discouraged 7% of potential students from enrolling in vocational education. Students often base their course selection on what course will be interesting or fun.

Influences of others would include friends, parents, counselors, school personnel, and teachers. An individual is less likely to express a preference and more likely to express a rejection for an activity or field of study that has had consistently negatively expressed opinions from a valued person (Social Learning and Career Decision Making, 1979).

Friends can be a very big influence on high school students. Herr (1987) found that students will seek the advice of a friend before entering into a vocational education. The problem is when the majority of the advice is negative. Dube (1987) found that eighty-nine percent of students try to discourage their friends from entering into a vocational education program, while only fourteen percent try to encourage their friends to enroll.

Parents can be an important role model in a child's life. They can add influence and guidance into their child's decision making. Herr's (1987) research found that students will seek the advice of parents before enrolling in vocational education courses. Otto (1987) also found that parents are the most influential factor when it concerns vocational education choice.

The results concerning the influence of teachers are conflicting. Dube (1987) found that teachers do not influence student's choice to enroll in vocational education courses. Herr (1987) on the other hand said that students will seek the advice of teachers before enrolling.

Counselors are another source of influence to students. A counselor's job is to advise students as to the schedule that best fits their career needs. They do not see it as their duty to persuade students toward one curriculum or another. Some reports show that many students reported getting little advice on information about from their guidance counselors (Silverman & Pritchard, 1996). Counselors are also lacking in training and guidelines to help today's youth prepare for their future in the work world. The value and expectations from the schools is that counselors should foster a program to push students towards a college bound career (Krei, Rosenbaum).

Remote External

Remote external reasons would include the socioeconomic status of the students, family size, parental income, and parental educational levels. It has been shown that a higher number of low socioeconomic status students enroll in vocational courses than in general courses (Campbell, Elliot, Hotckins, & Laughlin, 1987). Tuma (1996) also found that graduates whose parents had lower levels of education tended to earn more vocational credits than graduates whose parents had higher levels of education.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the means by which this research was conducted. It provides a detailed outline of the subjects of the study, the instrument that was used, and the procedure that was followed.

Subjects

The population of this study consisted of half of the tenth grade students enrolled at Reedsburg High School during the fourth quarter of the 2002-2003 school year. The sophomore class enrollment was 207 during the 2002-2003 school year. Due to scheduling conflicts the total number of these students who had an opportunity to participate in the study was 104. A total of 81 students brought back signed permission slips and participated in the study. At the tenth grade level, the students had tentatively mapped out their high school academic plan. So at this juncture in their high school career they had already made some choices about what electives they would be taking in the years to come. The tenth grade students were also chosen because they may still be able to benefit from the outcomes of this study.

Instrument

To acquire the appropriate data needed to address the proposed problem, a questionnaire was used. The researcher developed the questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire consisted of two parts that were filled out by half of the 10^{th} grade class. The first part consisted of 13 questions. The first four questions specifically dealt with questions to find out demographic information such as the gender of the student, family information, and the post high school plans

of the students. The remaining nine questions were designed to gather information as to why students were not enrolling in Technology Education courses. Students were given between two and five choices for each question to select when filling out this portion of the questionnaire. Questions were phrased to help with student understanding and to help the researcher understand the answers clearly. For example, question six asked students of their view of the program. Instead of allowing the students to use their own descriptor of the program, the researcher opted to give students two broad choices to select from. This allowed for more clear-cut answers in order to make the results of the questionnaire easier to code and analyze. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of two questions addressing the source and level of influence they experience when enrolling in high school courses. The first question sought to find out who influenced students to enroll in the courses that they take. The second question posed a series of statements about negative influence on course enrollment (or choice) to which the students responded. A three point Likert- type scale was used for these two questions. Students responded by choosing no influence, some influence, or high influence.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered on Tuesday, June 10, 2003. The week before the questionnaire was administered; a letter (Appendix A) was put into each of the tenth grade teacher's mailbox explaining what was to take place. On Monday, the day before the survey was administered; a consent form was passed out to all tenth grade students in attendance that day. They were instructed by their teacher that they were to return it the following day signed by their parents or guardian. To eliminate students concerns related to teacher or other students knowledge of their responses, an envelope was available to seal the completed surveys. The

surveys were also distributed and collected during the same class period, which helped ensure anonymity in the responses.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors influencing enrollment in courses at Reedsburg High School. This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the data that was collected by the method described in Chapter 3.

A total of 81 tenth-grade students completed the questionnaire. There were 12 absent the day the questionnaire was given and 3 students declined to fill out the questionnaire. Approximately half the sophomores were unavailable the day the questionnaire was filled out due to a class field trip. Five questionnaires were omitted from the analysis because the students failed to complete both sides of the questionnaire. Of the students that completed the questionnaire, 29.6% were males and 70.4% were female. When completing the questionnaire students were given the opportunity to fill out more then one answer per question. Because of this the totals on the tables do not always equal 81.

` Question 2 read: What are the occupations of your parents or guardian(s)? Answers to this question were wide-ranging. The occupations ranged from unskilled laborers to professional such as doctors. Question 3 read: What level of education did your parents or guardian(s) finish? Choices were some high school, high school diploma, associate degree, 2-year technical degree, some college, bachelor's degree, and master's degree. The responses to Question 3 are displayed in Table 1 on the following page.

Level of Education of Parents	Male	Female	Combined
Some High School	6.1%	12.5%	10.5%
High School Diploma	55.1%	30.8%	38.6%
Associate Degree	2.0%	1.9%	2.0%
2-year Technical Degree	10.2%	8.7%	9.2%
Some College	10.2%	19.2%	16.3%
Bachelor's Degree	8.2%	16.3%	13.7%
Master's Degree	8.2%	12.5%	9.8%

Table 2. Parent/Guardian level of education

There were seven different levels of education to choose from. The number of parents that graduated from high school was more then twice the amount of any other choice. Almost forty percent of parents ended their schooling at the high school level. Parents with an associate degree totaled only two percent of the educational level.

In response to question number 4, What do you plan on doing after high school?, the Table 2 below shows a total of 58% of the students planned on going on to a 4-year college. When broken down by gender, the 45.8% of the male students planned to go to a four year college and 63.2% of the females planned to go to a four year college. Also significant is that 22% of the students plan on going to a technical school. This breaks down to 37.5% of the males planning on attending a technical school while 15.8% of the females doing the same.

Post High School Plans	Male	Female	Combined
Get a Job	4.2%	3.5%	3.7%
Attend a Technical School	37.5%	15.8%	22.2%
Attend a four-year college	45.8%	63.2%	58.0%
Enter the Armed Service	12.5%	3.5%	6.2%
Undecided	0.0%	14.0%	9.9%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 3. Post-high school plans.

When choosing to answer question 5 students were allowed more then one choice when making their decision. Question 5 stated: Who helped you decide on your plans for after high school? Students and parents made up the highest percentage with 36.3% and 29.5% respectively. Teachers and undecided resulted with the lowest percentages at 3.4% and 1.4%. The results of Question 5 are shown below in Table 3.

Who helped make decisions	Male	Female	Combined
I decided myself	45.5%	33.6%	36.3%
A teacher	6.1%	2.7%	3.4%
A Guidance Counselor	3.0%	6.2%	5.5%
Your Parents	30.3%	29.2%	29.5%
Another Relative	6.1%	5.3%	5.5%
Another Student	3.0%	4.4%	4.1%
Undecided	3.0%	0.9%	1.4%
Other	3.0%	17.7%	14.4%

Table 4. Individuals helping students decide on plans for after high school

Question 6 asked whether students had a positive or negative attitude towards at their school. Question 7 addressed the attitudes of friends toward . The responses to questions six and seven are listed in Table 4, which shows that 96.3% of the students responded that they had a positive attitude towards the that was offered at their school. Seventy-eight out of the eighty-one students that responded looked at the program at their school with a positive attitude. Results are shown below in Table 4.

Number (Percentages)	Male	Female	Combined
Individuals			
Positive	23 (95.8%)	55 (96.5%)	78 (96.3%)
Negative	1 (4.2%)	2 (3.5%)	3 (3.7%)
Friends			
Positive	13 (54.2%)	18 (31.6%)	31 (38.3%)
Negative	2 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)
I don’t know	9 (37.5%)	39 (68.4%)	48 (59.3%)

Table 5. Attitude toward the Technology Education program

Question 8 asked whether students thought any of the courses sounded interesting or fun. Seventy-five percent of the males checked yes while 25% of the males checked no. In contrast, 33.3% of the females checked yes and 66.7% of the females checked no.

Number (Percentages)	Male	Female	Combined
Yes	18 (75.0%)	19 (33.3%)	37 (45.7%)
No	6 (25.0%)	38 (66.7%)	44 (65.4%)

Table 6. Do any Technology Education courses sound interesting and fun?

When asked in Question 9 if they ever wanted to take a class but could not fit it into their schedules 45.8% of the males said yes while only 29.8% of the females responded yes. These responses are summarized in Table 6 below.

Number (Percentages)	Male	Female	Combined
Yes	11 (45.8%)	17 (29.8%)	28 (34.6%)
No	13 (54.2%)	40 (70.2%)	53 (65.4%)

Table 7. Have you ever wanted to take a Technology class but could not fit it into your schedule?

Those students who answered yes to question 9 were then asked to answer question 10 which was related to what was the reason that the students could not fit the class into their schedule. In response, 63.6% of the males answered high school graduation requirements were the reason, and 58.8% of the females answered high school graduation requirements were the reason. None of the males answered that college entrance requirements were the reason, while 29.4% of the females answered that college entrance requirements were the reason.

Number (Percentages)	Male	Female	Combined
H.S. graduation requirements	7 (63.6%)	10 (58.8%)	17 (60.7%)
College entrance requirements	0 (0.0%)	5 (29.4%)	5 (17.9%)
Other.	4 (36.4%)	2 (11.8%)	6 (21.4%)

Table 8. What was the reason for not being able to fit the class into your schedule?

In response to Question 11: Has anyone ever told you not to take a course?, 92.6% of the responses were no. Of those that answered yes to question 11, they were then asked in question 12 to check who had told them not to take a Technology Education course. Checked off was 1

teacher, 1 relative and 4 student. Below is Table 8 which represents the answers to both questions 11 and 12.

Number (Percentages)	Male	Female	Combined
Yes	3 (12.5%)	3 (5.3%)	6 (7.4%)
No	21 (87.5%)	54 (94.7%)	75 (92.6%)

Who was that person	Male	Female	Combined
A teacher	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)
A Guidance Counselor	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Your Parents	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Another Relative	0 (0.0%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)
Another Student	3(100.0%)	1 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 9. Has anyone ever told you not to take a course? If you answered yes to question 11, who was that person?

The following information regards questions thirteen and fourteen. The mean and standard deviation are two descriptive statistics that are used to describe the data from the questions. Those questions with a standard deviation of over 1.00 show that student responses were spread out throughout the five choices they were given. They were not in total agreement about the question. Those questions with a standard deviation of less than 1.00 show a more unified set of answers. These answers have a higher total agreement then those with a standard deviation above 1.00.

The data in question thirteen indicates the area of influence of course selection. Students are the biggest influence on what course selections they select. This is shown with a standard deviation of 0.764. Parents and relatives are the second highest influence. Females show their friends to be a high influence with a standard deviation of 0.986, while males show a 1.17

standard deviation when it comes to influence by friends. Guidance counselors show the least amount of influence on students when it comes to what courses they select. Teachers have some influence on course selection while others show very little influence on course selection. Question 13 was based on a Likert scale. Tables 10 through 14 break down the answers to question 13.

How much influence does "Yourself" have on course selection?

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	0	2	2
2. Little Influence	0	0	0
3. Some Influence	2	1	3
4. Moderate Influence	4	7	11
5. High Influence	18	47	65
Mean 4.69		Standard Deviation	0.764
Response Percentages			
No Influence	0.0%	3.5%	2.5%
Little Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Influence	8.3%	1.8%	3.7%
Moderate Influence	16.7%	12.3%	13.6%
High Influence	75.0%	82.5%	80.2%

Table 10

How much influence do "Parents/Family" have on course selection?

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	3	1	4
2. Little Influence	3	8	11
3. Some Influence	9	14	23
4. Moderate Influence	3	23	26
5. High Influence	6	11	17

Mean 3.51 Standard Deviation 1.112

Response Percentages			
No Influence	12.5%	1.8%	4.9%
Little Influence	12.5%	14.0%	13.6%
Some Influence	37.5%	24.6%	28.4%
Moderate Influence	12.5%	40.4%	32.1%
High Influence	25.0%	19.3%	21.0%

Table 11

How much influence do “Friends” have on course selection?

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	4	5	9
2. Little Influence	5	14	19
3. Some Influence	8	22	30
4. Moderate Influence	5	14	19
5. High Influence	2	2	4

Mean 2.88 Standard Deviation 1.047

Response Percentages			
No Influence	16.7%	8.8%	11.1%
Little Influence	20.8%	24.6%	23.5%
Some Influence	33.3%	38.6%	37.0%
Moderate Influence	20.8%	24.6%	23.5%
High Influence	8.3%	3.5%	4.9%

Table 12

How much influence do "Guidance Counselors" have on course selection?

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	11	12	23
2. Little Influence	5	13	18
3. Some Influence	6	18	24
4. Moderate Influence	1	11	12
5. High Influence	1	3	4

Mean 2.46 Standard Deviation 1.187

Response Percentages			
No Influence	45.8%	21.1%	28.4%
Little Influence	20.8%	22.8%	22.2%
Some Influence	25.0%	31.6%	29.6%
Moderate Influence	4.2%	19.3%	14.8%
High Influence	4.2%	5.3%	4.9%

Table 13

How much influence do "Teachers" have on course selection?

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	6	10	16
2. Little Influence	6	10	16
3. Some Influence	9	22	31
4. Moderate Influence	2	12	14
5. High Influence	1	3	4

Mean 2.68 Standard Deviation 1.120

Response Percentages			
No Influence	25.0%	17.5%	19.8%
Little Influence	25.0%	17.5%	19.8%
Some Influence	37.5%	38.6%	38.3%
Moderate Influence	8.3%	21.1%	17.3%
High Influence	4.2%	5.3%	4.9%

Table 14

How much influence do "Others" have on course selection?

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	3	6	9
2. Little Influence	0	0	0
3. Some Influence	0	2	2
4. Moderate Influence	2	1	3
5. High Influence	1	3	4

Mean 2.61 Standard Deviation 1.704

Response Percentages			
No Influence	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Little Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Influence	0.0%	16.6%	11.1%
Moderate Influence	33.3%	8.3%	16.6%
High Influence	16.6%	25.0%	22.2%

Table 15

In question fourteen there were four main areas that showed significance. It was found that disliking the instructor, having friends enrolled in the class, parents discouraging students to take the course, and the guidance counselor advising students not to take the course had no influence to little influence on the students decision not to enroll in a course.

An area where the males and females disagreed on the influence on their decision not to enroll in was in lacking mechanical ability or skills. The mean of the males was at 1.63 (in between no influence and little influence) where the mean of the females was at 3.21 (in between some influence and moderate influence).

For the following statements the standard deviation was under 1.00. This indicates that both the males and females were in agreement with their answers. The statements were: dislike the students in , poor experiences in middle school courses, dislike the instructor who teaches the course, parents discourage taking the course, guidance counselor advised not taking the course. In each of these instances more then 56% combined agreed that these statements had no influence with the highest in agreement at 80%.

There are three statements that the males were in agreement where the females were not in agreement. These statements were: classes seemed like a lot of work, lack of mechanical ability or skills, and friends enrolled in the class. Each of these statements was between 45% and 55% in the belief that these statements had no influence on their decision not to enroll in a course.

The remainder of the statements had a varied response. None of these statements had a standard deviation of less then 1.00. This suggests that student's answers were not in agreement and there were a wider range of answers for the following statements. These statements were: course content not interesting, subjects that I like are not offered, less time for electives because of graduation requirements, can not fit into my four year plan for elective courses, course content is not relative to my future career plans, friends are not taking the course, feeling that the course is not for college bounds students, and the final statement was other.

Tables 16 through 32 indicate the responses that were given for question fourteen.

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Dislike of the image of the students in .

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	13	42	55
2. Little Influence	8	7	15
3. Some Influence	2	7	9
4. Moderate Influence	1	1	2
5. High Influence	0	1	0

Mean 1.48 Standard Deviation 0.787

Response Percentages			
No Influence	54.2%	73.7%	67.9%
Little Influence	33.3%	12.3%	18.5%
Some Influence	8.3%	12.3%	11.1%
Moderate Influence	4.2%	1.8%	2.5%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 16

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Class seems like a lot of work.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	11	22	33
2. Little Influence	8	15	23
3. Some Influence	3	13	16
4. Moderate Influence	2	6	8
5. High Influence	0	1	1

Mean 2.02 Standard Deviation 1.054

Response Percentages			
No Influence	45.8%	38.6%	40.7%
Little Influence	33.3%	26.3%	28.4%
Some Influence	12.5%	22.8%	19.8%
Moderate Influence	8.3%	10.5%	9.9%
High Influence	0.0%	1.8%	1.2%

Table 17

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Lack of mechanical ability or skills.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	14	9	23
2. Little Influence	5	7	12
3. Some Influence	2	16	18
4. Moderate Influence	2	13	15
5. High Influence	2	12	13

Mean 2.74 Standard Deviation 1.430

Response Percentages			
No Influence	58.3%	15.8%	28.4%
Little Influence	20.8%	12.3%	14.8%
Some Influence	8.3%	28.1%	22.2%
Moderate Influence	8.3%	22.8%	18.5%
High Influence	4.2%	21.1%	16.0%

Table 18

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Poor experiences in middle school courses.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	18	28	46
2. Little Influence	3	15	18
3. Some Influence	3	10	13
4. Moderate Influence	0	4	4
5. High Influence	0	0	0

Mean 1.69 Standard Deviation 0.911

Response Percentages			
No Influence	75.0%	49.1%	56.8%
Little Influence	12.5%	26.3%	22.2%
Some Influence	12.5%	17.5%	16.0%
Moderate Influence	0.0%	7.0%	4.9%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 19

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Course content not interesting.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	10	8	18
2. Little Influence	3	14	17
3. Some Influence	7	15	22
4. Moderate Influence	4	6	10
5. High Influence	0	14	14

Mean 2.81 Standard Deviation 1.371

Response Percentages			
No Influence	41.7%	14.0%	22.2%
Little Influence	12.5%	24.6%	21.0%
Some Influence	29.2%	26.3%	27.2%
Moderate Influence	16.7%	10.5%	12.3%
High Influence	0.0%	24.6%	17.3%

Table 20

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Subject(s) that I like are not offered.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	8	20	28
2. Little Influence	6	16	22
3. Some Influence	5	12	17
4. Moderate Influence	3	4	7
5. High Influence	2	5	7

Mean 2.30 Standard Deviation 1.261

Response Percentages			
No Influence	33.3%	35.1%	34.6%
Little Influence	25.0%	28.1%	27.2%
Some Influence	20.8%	21.1%	21.0%
Moderate Influence	12.5%	7.0%	8.6%
High Influence	8.3%	8.8%	8.6%

Table 21

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Less time for electives because of graduation requirements.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	8	11	19
2. Little Influence	3	10	13
3. Some Influence	7	17	24
4. Moderate Influence	6	12	18
5. High Influence	0	7	7

Mean 2.77 Standard Deviation 1.270

Response Percentages			
No Influence	33.3%	19.3%	23.5%
Little Influence	12.5%	17.5%	16.0%
Some Influence	29.2%	29.8%	29.6%
Moderate Influence	25.0%	21.1%	22.2%
High Influence	0.0%	12.3%	8.6%

Table 22

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Cannot fit into my four-year plan for elective courses.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	9	14	23
2. Little Influence	2	10	12
3. Some Influence	6	13	19
4. Moderate Influence	4	7	11
5. High Influence	3	13	16

Mean 2.81 Standard Deviation 1.475

Response Percentages			
No Influence	37.5%	24.6%	28.4%
Little Influence	8.3%	17.5%	14.8%
Some Influence	25.0%	22.8%	23.5%
Moderate Influence	16.7%	12.3%	13.6%
High Influence	12.5%	22.8%	19.8%

Table 23

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Course content is not relevant to my future career plans.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	8	3	11
2. Little Influence	1	5	6
3. Some Influence	9	18	27
4. Moderate Influence	4	7	11
5. High Influence	2	24	26

Mean 3.43 Standard Deviation 1.360

Response Percentages			
No Influence	33.3%	5.3%	13.6%
Little Influence	4.2%	8.8%	7.4%
Some Influence	37.5%	31.6%	33.3%
Moderate Influence	16.7%	12.3%	13.6%
High Influence	8.3%	42.1%	32.1%

Table 24

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Lack of information on course offerings.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	12	20	32
2. Little Influence	6	17	23
3. Some Influence	3	14	17
4. Moderate Influence	3	6	9
5. High Influence	0	0	0

Mean 2.04 Standard Deviation 1.024

Response Percentages			
No Influence	50.0%	35.1%	39.5%
Little Influence	25.0%	29.8%	28.4%
Some Influence	12.5%	24.6%	21.0%
Moderate Influence	12.5%	10.5%	11.1%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 25

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Dislike the instructor who teaches the courses.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	16	45	61
2. Little Influence	7	5	12
3. Some Influence	1	5	6
4. Moderate Influence	0	1	1
5. High Influence	0	1	1

Mean 1.38 Standard Deviation 0.779

Response Percentages			
No Influence	66.7%	78.9%	75.3%
Little Influence	29.2%	8.8%	14.8%
Some Influence	4.2%	8.8%	7.4%
Moderate Influence	0.0%	1.8%	1.2%
High Influence	0.0%	1.8%	1.2%

Table 26

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Friends enrolled in the class.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	13	29	42
2. Little Influence	5	11	16
3. Some Influence	5	12	17
4. Moderate Influence	1	5	6
5. High Influence	0	0	0

Mean 1.84 Standard Deviation 0.999

Response Percentages			
No Influence	54.2%	50.9%	51.9%
Little Influence	20.8%	19.3%	19.8%
Some Influence	20.8%	21.1%	21.0%
Moderate Influence	4.2%	8.8%	7.4%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 27

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Parents discouraged taking the course.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	18	41	59
2. Little Influence	1	6	7
3. Some Influence	4	9	13
4. Moderate Influence	1	1	2
5. High Influence	0	0	0

Mean 1.48 Standard Deviation 0.848

Response Percentages			
No Influence	75.0%	71.9%	72.8%
Little Influence	4.2%	10.5%	8.6%
Some Influence	16.7%	15.8%	16.0%
Moderate Influence	4.2%	1.8%	2.5%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 28

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Guidance counselor advised not taking the course.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	21	44	65
2. Little Influence	0	6	6
3. Some Influence	2	5	7
4. Moderate Influence	1	2	3
5. High Influence	0	0	0

Mean 1.36 Standard Deviation 0.791

Response Percentages			
No Influence	87.5%	77.2%	80.2%
Little Influence	0.0%	10.5%	7.4%
Some Influence	8.3%	8.8%	8.6%
Moderate Influence	4.2%	3.5%	3.7%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 29

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Friends are not taking the course.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	16	30	46
2. Little Influence	4	10	14
3. Some Influence	1	11	12
4. Moderate Influence	2	4	6
5. High Influence	1	2	3

Mean 1.84 Standard Deviation 1.149

Response Percentages			
No Influence	66.7%	52.6%	56.8%
Little Influence	16.7%	17.5%	17.3%
Some Influence	4.2%	19.3%	14.8%
Moderate Influence	8.3%	7.0%	7.4%
High Influence	4.2%	3.5%	3.7%

Table 30

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Feeling the course is not for college bound students.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	15	26	41
2. Little Influence	2	13	15
3. Some Influence	4	11	15
4. Moderate Influence	2	4	6
5. High Influence	1	3	4

Mean 1.98 Standard Deviation 1.196

Response Percentages			
No Influence	62.5%	45.6%	50.6%
Little Influence	8.3%	22.8%	18.5%
Some Influence	16.7%	19.3%	18.5%
Moderate Influence	8.3%	7.0%	7.4%
High Influence	4.2%	5.3%	4.9%

Table 31

How much influence is the following statement on student's decision not to enroll in a Technology Education course?

Other.

Rating Scale	Male	Female	Total
1. No Influence	2	0	2
2. Little Influence	1	0	1
3. Some Influence	0	0	0
4. Moderate Influence	1	0	1
5. High Influence	0	0	0

Mean 1.60 Standard Deviation 1.356

Response Percentages			
No Influence	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Little Influence	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Some Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Moderate Influence	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
High Influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 32

CHAPTER V

Summary and Recommendations

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors influenced the decisions of Reedsburg High School students to not enroll in Technology Education classes. The data from this study can be used to answer the questions listed under Research Questions in Chapter 1. There is no real significant data that suggests there are people influencing students not to enroll in Technology Education courses. Data suggests that there is a very positive image among the students about the Technology Education courses offered at the school. Worth noting, though, is the fact that guidance counselors and teachers have very little influence at all on the courses which students choose to take throughout high school. This rather unexpected result bears closer examination. The course curriculum is a factor in why males are more interested in taking Technology Education courses than the females. Females showed less interest in taking the courses due to the fact they did not find it interesting. Also a factor in why students were not enrolling in Technology Education courses was graduation requirements. Of the males and females that responded that they would like to take a Technology Education class but didn't, the main reason was because of graduation requirements. Students were unable to fit electives into their schedules and therefore ended up not taking Technology Education courses that they may have otherwise.

Further conclusions from the research data are listed below.

1. Fifty-five percent of the parents or guardians received only a high school diploma. From the literature review this would suggest that the enrollment in Technology

Education courses would be higher. The data suggests that this is not true at Reedsburg High School.

2. Fifty-eight percent of the students responded that they were planning on going to a four year college. The requirements for attending these colleges do not allow for students to take extra electives like Technology Education courses that they may find interesting, but are not required to get into the college of their choice. By not taking electives, students have a better chance of meeting college entrance requirements.
3. Only three of the respondents stated that they have a negative attitude towards the Technology Education program.
4. Students themselves are the biggest influence on course selection.
5. Teachers have very little influence on course selection.
6. Guidance counselors have almost no influence on course selection.
7. Females responded more strongly that others had an influence on their course selection than the males. This was found to be true in all but three statements in question number fourteen. Statements in which females responded had less influence on them than the females were dislike the image of the students in , subjects that I like are not offered, and parents discouraged taking the course.
8. Females responded that lacking mechanical ability or skills had some influence to moderate influence on why they did not take Technology Education courses, while the males responded that lacking mechanical ability or skills had no influence to little influence on why they did not take Technology Education courses.
9. Females responded that the course content not being relevant to future plans had some influence to moderate influence on why they did not take Technology

Education courses, while the males responded that this had only little to some influence on why they were not taking Technology Education courses.

10. For both males and females, friends had little to some influence on their decision not to take Technology Education courses. The influence of friends was a bigger factor in the decision of female students than in the decisions of male students.

Recommendations

As a result of the study, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration. Since the study revealed that no individuals were actively influencing students to avoid classes, and since the reputation of the department appears positive, the faculty and staff can focus their efforts on other factors. One such factor is the need to clearly communicate details regarding courses. This would allow for the students to see how the classes would address the needs they will have for their futures.

The four year plan should be revised to allow all students a chance to take more elective courses. The descriptions for Technology Education course should be redefined so that all students have knowledge of what to expect from the courses. In the description there should also be information on how these courses can be used in the students' future. A push must be made to inform the students of what the Technology Education courses have to offer which may possibly increase their enrollment in Technology Education courses.

Guidance counselors too need to make an effort to become more influential in the decisions that students are making towards course selections. A survey to analyze why guidance counselors have such minimal effect on students decisions in class selection could provide counselors with a way to better help the student population with their course selection.

Teachers need to become more involved in the decisions that students are making when looking at course selections. A follow up survey would be recommended to study what courses students would be interested in taking in the Technology Education field. This could offer teachers a bigger insight to ways to change their curriculums that could increase interest and enrollment in Technology Education courses.

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APPENDIX A

Dear 10th grade English Teachers:

On Monday June 9, 2003 I will be putting consent forms in your mailboxes. Please hand these out to the students in your English classes. Please read over the consent forms with the students and explain to the students that they need to bring back the signed consent forms on Tuesday June 10, 2003.

I will be putting an envelope in your mailbox on Tuesday June 10, 2003. These surveys should be given out only to those students that bring back signed consent forms. Students should hand in the surveys to you and be put directly in the envelope so that the anonymity of the students is guaranteed. At the end of the day I will come to each of your classrooms to collect these envelopes.

I appreciate all of your help. Please see me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Gronley

Technology Education Teacher

APPENDIX B

Student Questionnaire

Please respond to the following statements as they relate to your course selections. Your thoughtful responses will help in improving the Technology Education Program at Reedsburg High School. Please check all the appropriate responses.

1. _____Male _____Female

2. What are the occupations of your parents or guardian(s)?

3. What level of education did your parents or guardian(s) finish?
   _____Some High School
   _____High School Diploma
   _____Associate Degree
   _____2-year Technical Degree
   _____Some College
   _____Bachelor's Degree
   _____Master's Degree

4. What do you plan on doing after High School?
   _____Get a Job
   _____Attend a Technical School
   _____Attend a four-year college
   _____Enter the Armed Services
   _____Undecided
   _____Other (please state)_____

5. Who helped you decide on your plans for after high school?
   _____I decided myself
   _____A teacher
   _____A guidance counselor
   _____Your parents
   _____Another relative
   _____Another student
   _____Undecided
   _____Other (please state)_____

6. What is your view of the Technology Education program at your school?
   _____Positive
   _____Negative

7. How do your friends view the Technology Education program at your school?
   _____Positively
   _____Negatively
   _____I don't know

8. Do any of the courses that are offered in the Technology Education department sound interesting and fun?
   _____Yes, which course?_____
   _____No

9. Have you ever wanted to take a Technology Education class but could not fit it into your schedule?
   _____Yes
   _____No

10. What was the reason for not being able to fit the class into your schedule?
    _____High School graduation requirements
    _____College entrance requirements
    _____Other

11. Has anyone ever told you not to take a Technology Education course?
    _____Yes
    _____No

12. If you answered **YES** to question #11, who was that person?
    _____A teacher
    _____A guidance counselor
    _____Your parents
    _____Another relative
    _____Another student
    _____Other (please state)_____

Using the following scale, please circle the number that best describes the way you feel about each statement.

1	2	3	4	5
No Influence	Little Influence	Some Influence	Moderate Influence	High Influence

13. How much influence do these people have on your course selection?

1	2	3	4	5	Yourself
1	2	3	4	5	Parents / Family
1	2	3	4	5	Friends
1	2	3	4	5	Guidance Counselor
1	2	3	4	5	Teacher
1	2	3	4	5	Others (please state)_____

14. How influential are the following statements on your decision **not** to enroll in a Technology Education course?

1	2	3	4	5	Dislike the image of the students in Technology Education
1	2	3	4	5	Classes seem like a lot of work
1	2	3	4	5	Lack mechanical ability or skills
1	2	3	4	5	Poor experiences in middle school courses
1	2	3	4	5	Course content not interesting
1	2	3	4	5	Subject(s) that I like are not offered
1	2	3	4	5	Less time for electives because of graduation requirements
1	2	3	4	5	Cannot fit into my four year plan for elective courses
1	2	3	4	5	Course content is not relevant to my future career plans
1	2	3	4	5	Lack of information on course offerings
1	2	3	4	5	Dislike the instructor who teaches the course
1	2	3	4	5	Friends enrolled in the class
1	2	3	4	5	Parents discouraged taking the course
1	2	3	4	5	Guidance counselor advised not taking the course
1	2	3	4	5	Friends are not taking the course
1	2	3	4	5	Feeling that the course is not for college bound students
1	2	3	4	5	Others (please state)_____

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING